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QUESTIONNAIRE ON FOREIGN LANGUAGE TESTING AND RESULTS OF QUESTIONNAIRE.

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TWO HUNDRED QUESTIONNAIRES WERE CIRCULATED IN THE UNITED STATES AND FRANCE IN ORDER TO GATHER OPINIONS ON THE CURRENT PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE TESTING. QUESTIONS ON THE SURVEY ARE RELATED TO THE PREPARATION OF A FINAL EXAMINATION FOR STUDENTS WITH A FLES BACKGROUND WHO ARE COMPLETING THEIR FIRST YEAR OF HIGH SCHOOL FRENCH. ANSWERS AND OPINIONS ARE TABULATED AND PRESENTED WITH EXPLANATORY COMMENTS AND INTERPRETATIONS BY THE AUTHOR. (SS)

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BEVERLY HILLS UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

BEVERLY HILLS HIGH SCHOOL

INCENTIVE INCREMENT PROJECT

QUESTIONNAIRE ON FOREIGN LANGUAGE TESTING
and
RESULTS OF QUESTIONNAIRE

FL 000 469

presented by

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French/Spanish Teacher
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June, 1967

PREFACE

In addition to the Examination Procedure, which is my project for the Incentive Increment, I am submitting my Questionnaire on Foreign Language Testing and Results of Questionnaire on Foreign Language Testing.

The purpose of the Questionnaire... is to make a survey of current practices among Foreign Language Specialists. It evolved from discussions in the Foreign Language Workshops at Beverly Hills High School in which I participated in 1963 and 1964. Since opinions varied considerably on many points concerning methods of evaluating language skills, I felt that a survey of current thinking on the very items we discussed might prove valuable in helping to guide us in the type and content of our examinations. The present study is a secondary project, undertaken only as a survey and too limited for conclusions concerning what should or should not be done. It would be most interesting, however, to make it the subject of a major study at some later date when there is as opportunity to prepare a large number of questionnaires for widespread distribution. Since only 200 questionnaires were prepared, they were carefully circulated through the help of personal contacts among key people in almost every phase of foreign language instruction: supervisors, testing experts and specialists in foreign language teaching at the the elementary, junior high, high school, junior college, college and university levels in representative sections of the United States as well as in France. Included are two NDEA Foreign Language Institutes, one for FLES teachers, the other for secondary school teachers and supervisors (held in France).

All areas mentioned above are represented among the responses received and in the results thereof. An equal number of responses were received from eastern and mid-western states (10 each). There were 17 responses from western states, not including 18 from the Beverly Hills Unified School District, Beverly Hills, California. At least 10 additional responses from various areas arrived too late for tabulation. (Others are expected but, obviously, will not be tabulated.)

I should like to thank Miss Elaine Ominsky of the Baltimore Polytechnic Institute for her efforts in circulating the Questionnaire in France; Mrs. Hannah Choldin, Foreign Language Consultant for the Chicago High Schools, who undertook its distribution among master teachers in the Chicago area; Mr. Albert JeKenta, Director of FLES at the Beverly Hills Unified School District and Dr. Richard Bertain, Director of Personnel, Beverly Hills Unified School District, for their generous cooperation and assistance.

Results of Questionnaire on Foreign Language Testing

In spite of the careful tabulation of responses, many discrepancies appear to exist in the totals. This is due mainly to the fact that many questions were not answered in the manner requested. Also, answers which were to be rated in order of preference were very often either omitted entirely or incomplete. In some, comments were substituted for answers that should have been checked.

The comments were most difficult to tabulate. It became necessary to make a list of all comments given on the section in question. Comments that were mentioned most often served as the basis for my summaries. In some cases, minority comments were mentioned in the report as a matter of interest. Great care was taken to refrain from injecting my personal opinions.

The Questionnaire itself does not treat all phases of testing. As mentioned in the Preface, it deals mainly with points on which there was some difference of opinion during our Workshop discussions. Items on which we agreed did not necessarily appear in the Questionnaire. This accounts for the fact that one of the omissions was the matter of manner in which directions to the student should be given. I regret that this omission was made, since it is an important point. It was called to my attention by one of the respondents who felt that directions should be given in English. If the Questionnaire is circulated again at some future date, I shall be certain to include it as well as any other omissions that may be called to my attention.

Vocabulary and Comprehension: Written

1. a. 10
   b. 12
   c. 17
   d. 14
   e. 16

Although a slight preference is shown for 1.c, the comment that "each is useful in its proper place was given in the majority of cases. For example, it was mentioned that 1.a is appropriate in a translation course; 1.b and 1.d in an audio-lingual program; 1.c was considered hardest to control.

2. The concensus was that the knowledge of an individual word cannot be tested without also testing comprehension (of other words involved) or intelligence unless a direct translation of the word is requested, as in 1.a. Alternate methods advocated, however, included questions requiring synonyms, antonyms, completion and matching exercises (in the foreign language) with the full realization that intelligence and comprehension of words other than those being tested entered into these types of questions.

Grammar

		1	2	3	4	5
1.	a.	12	8	8	13	5
	b.	3	10	14	13	3
	c.	22	12	9	2	1
	d.	9	8	5	8	13
	e.	8	4	9	4	19

2. a. 31
   b. 21
   c. 6

It was generally agreed that questions should test one point at a time, especially at the early stages of language learning, as evidenced by the fact that 1.c was clearly chosen as first choice and 1.e clearly chosen as last choice. This feeling is further evidenced by the overwhelming majority for 2.a. It is interesting to note that the example mentioned in 2.a makes an even finer distinction inasmuch as it does not test the passé composé but only a part of it, the past participle.

General

1. a. 4
   b.1. 26
   b.2. 18
   b.3. 11

The majority felt that objective examinations do test points adequately provided they test one point at a time and, according to the comments, provided they are well constructed and geared to the material covered in the course. It was also mentioned that objective tests should be so constructed as to discriminate adequately between good students and poor ones. Questions should be neither too obvious nor too chalenging.

2. a. 24
   b. 24
   c. 24

It would seem from the tabulation and from the comments that all the conditions presented in this question serve as basis for a completely objective final examination. (Complete despair was the reaction of several people to 2.b!)

Audio-Lingual Testing

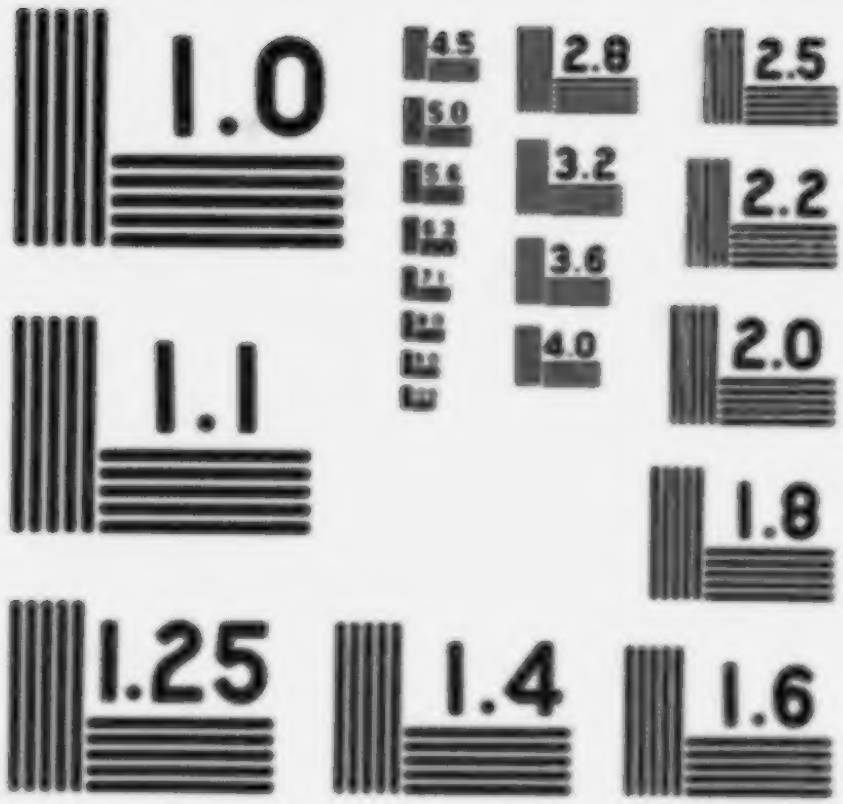
	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. a.	7	9	3	10	6	5
b.	2	2	14	11	6	3
c.	3	7	3	6	10	9
d.	2	4	12	4	5	12
e.	27	9	3	1	4	3
f.	15	14	3	5	5	6

The tabulation results (1.e first choice; 1.f second choice; 1.b third choice) seem to indicate that the most popular type question involved listening to a question and giving a spoken response (1.e). The second choice involved listening to a question and choosing the correct spoken response (1.f). The third in popularity was a dictée avoiding grammatical points as much as possible (1.b). Least popular were a dictée on completely new material (1.c) and written test on sound discrimination (1.d).

Although 1.e was preferred, concern was expressed in comments as to its feasibility. It was felt that while 1.e is difficult to evaluate objectively, 1.f was more practical from this standpoint. It was pointed out, however, that 1.f could be extremely complex unless items were grouped by types with separate directions for each. The dictée was considered appropriate only as a means of teaching orthography.

2. The comments concerning implementation of i.e revealed that a better method is needed. Several people suggested that a way of implementing 1.e would be to give teachers released time to listen to tapes or to

conduct personal interviews with students (two instructors per student, one conducting the interview, the other taking notes and grading). Most felt that it was not practical and that it required more time than was available.



MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART
NATIONAL BUREAU OF STANDARDS - 1963

Department Examination

1. a. 5
   b. 18
   c. 20
   d. 10

There was not a clear majority concerning whether only the required two-hour final examination should be a departmental examination (1.b) or whether a mid-semester departmental audio-lingual examination should also be given (1.c). There was, however, a clear preference for 1.b and 1.c over 1.a and 1.d (both representing extreme cases - none at all in the case of 1.a and all unit tests in the case of 1.d).

2. Comments on whether or not the type of examination given is of importance if students are being graded on a curve were fairly evenly distributed between "yes" and "no" type answers. Most answers were qualified so that a "yes" response became a "no" response and vice-versa. There was a tendency to philosophize on the value of grading on the curve even though this was not the question. Sample responses are: It must be appropriate in difficulty to avoid discouragement; It does not matter what type of examination is given provided there is some basis for students to display their relative knowledge of the subject; It does not matter provided each teacher has his own curve; The use of curves in grading is of questionable value - a curve may serve as a means of hiding poor teaching or a bad curriculum; I'm opposed to grading on the curve;

For the sake of objectivity, questions must be given which have only one answer when graded on the curve; Why are curves necessary?

		1	2	3
2.	a.	45	6	3
	b.	10	21	22
	c.	1	11	42

Concerning method of preparation and/or selection of an examination, the tabulation indicates an overwhelming preference for an examination carefully prepared by all members of the department and covering all points of the textbook (2.a). It is interesting to note that the tabulation also reveals an equally overwhelming vote opposing an examination prepared by a member of the department who is not teaching that level (2.c). A commercially prepared examination which none of the teachers sees until the day it is given (2.b) is only half as objectionable as the latter(2.c).

3. a. 1
   b. 30
   c. 7
   d. 23

Most responses showed a preference for telling the students the type of examination they will take (3.b) with a close second preference for giving as much information as possible about the examination as long as the actual questions are not revealed(3.d).

Definite objection is indicated to the two extreme choices, 3.a, giving no information and 3.c, telling students the specific points covered, the latter extreme being less objectionable than the former.

Comments reflected opinions concerning the purpose of testing. In several responses in which 3.b was selected, comments indicated that with 3.c a major purpose for giving the examination - motivation for a review in depth - would be served. Other comments were: Students should be responsible for whatever is taught since language is cumulative; Students should know what type of questions are to be asked for psychological reasons; It depends on what is being tested.

4. a. 16
   b. 25
   c. 11

A clear majority favored a division of 40% AL; 30% grammar; 30% reading. Comments reflected the general feeling that distinctions of this type are likely to be arbitrary and inflexibility would be self-defeating. Since the examination should reflect the organization of the course, the weight of each section should be determined by the teacher and should depend on the course of study.

BEVERLY HILLS HIGH SCHOOL

FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

Questionnaire on Foreign Language Testing

Name of participant _____

Address (In U.S.A.) _____

_____
City State

School or school district _____

BEVERLY HILLS HIGH SCHOOL
FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is being circulated throughout the United States as well as abroad so that we may collect as much data from as many different situations as possible. The information gathered will be used to help us in our current revision of testing procedures and policies. In composing this questionnaire, we had in mind primarily trying to arrive at policies concerning the preparation of a final examination for students with a FLES background who are completing their first year of High School French (French 1). Your answers will be kept completely confidential and under no circumstances will individuals or districts be quoted. Your help and cooperation will be greatly appreciated, and we shall be glad to send you the results of our study as soon as they are tabulated.

Vocabulary and Comprehension: Written

1. Which of the following questions do you feel really tests the student's knowledge of the meaning of individual words?

		Student's Answer
_____ a.	Give the French word for "dog"	le chien
_____ b.	Quel est le contraire du mot "long"? ..	court
_____ c.	Je vois avec _____.	les yeux
_____ d.	Je vois avec 1) les yeux 2) la bouche 3) le bras	1. 2. 3.

_____ e. A few of all four types except _____

Other Comments: _____

_____

2. Without using pictures or English, how can we test the student's knowledge of an individual word without also testing comprehension or intelligence? (As in samples 1.b and 1.c) _____

_____

_____

Grammar

1. Which of the following groups of questions on the passé composé do you feel is the fairest? (Rate them by numbering 1 - 5).

_____ a. Complétez les phrases suivantes en employant le passé composé des verbes entre parenthèses.

		Student's answer
1) (Acheter)	Voici la maison que nous _____	avons achetée
2) (Sortir)	Je connais la fille qui _____	est sortie

____ b. Complétez les phrases suivantes en employant la forme convenable des verbes entre parenthèses.

Student's answer

1) (Acheter) Voici la maison que nous avons ____ .... achetée

2) (Sortir) Je connais la fille qui est ____ ..... sortie

____ c. Complétez les phrases suivantes en employant le passé composé des verbes entre parenthèses.

1) (Acheter) Nous _____ la maison ..... avons acheté

2) (Sortir) Le garçon _____ ..... est sorti

____ d. Complétez les phrases suivantes en écrivant le participe passé des verbes entre parenthèses.

1) (Lire) Nous avons _____ le livre ..... lu

2) (Mourir) Il est _____ ..... mort

____ e. Complétez la phrase suivante en employant le temps convenable des verbes entre parenthèses.

1) (Acheter) Il n'y en avait que trois quand nous les _____ ..... avons achetés)

2) (Sortir) Le professeur était en train d'expliquer la leçon quand la jeune fille _____ ..... est sortie

2. Do you feel that questions should

____ a. Test only one point at a time (as in 1.d)
____ b. Test several points at a time (as in 1.a, 1.b, 1.c)
____ c. Test as much as possible (as in 1.e)
Other Comments: _____

General

1. What are your feelings about purely objective tests (The answer is all right, or all wrong.) For example: Choisissez la réponse convenable et indiquez votre réponse sur la feuille de réponse:

Student's answer

A. Je n'ai pas vu _____ oiseau bleu
1) cet
2) ces
3) cette
4) ce

1), 2), 3), 4).

Student's answer

D. Voilà les jeunes filles que _____ 1), 2), 3), 4).
1) nous avons vues
2) sont venues
3) vous avez admiré
4) il a regardées

_____ a. They are completely useless.
_____ b. They test points adequately, provided
_____ 1) they test one point at a time, as in A.
_____ 2) they offer more of a challenge, as in D.
_____ 3) Other_____

_____

_____

2. Assuming that an examination in which answers are written offers a better means of evaluation, and assuming that written examinations are given all semester, check the condition or conditions which would cause you to endorse a completely objective final examination:

_____ a. There are many teachers in the department giving the same examination and uniform grading is essential in determining departmental curve for this examination.
Comments: _____

_____

_____

_____ b. Final examinations last two hours and each teacher may have two classes taking the exam the day before grades and department curve are due.
Comments: _____

_____

_____

_____ c. Audio-lingual sections of the examination are given at least a week prior to final exam week.
Comments: _____

_____

_____

Audio-Lingual Testing

1. Please number the following methods of evaluating audio-lingual (and/or oral-aural) proficiency in order of preference.

_____ a. Dictée involving many grammatical points.
For example: Elles se sont présentées au bureau des étrangers et ils les ont vues.
Comments: _____

_____

_____ b. Dictée avoiding grammatical points as much as possible.
Comments: _____

_____

_____ c. Dictée on completely new material..
Comments: _____

_____

_____ d. Written test on sound discrimination

Ex. A. Indiquez si les lettres soulignéesà droite se prononcent comme les lettres soulignées à gauche

1. Qu'est-ce	1. caisse
2. un nom	2. un homme

B. Indiquez la prononciation des lettres soulignées en choisissant la réponse convenable
1. Les actualités a. s b. z c. ne se prononce pas

_____ e. Have the student answer questions orally (in the lab.) Grade as follows:
1. student answers accurately
2. student pronounces well
3. student uses correct sentence structure
4. student understood question thoroughly

Grade
A: 1, 2, 3, 4.
B: 1, 2, 4. or 2, 3, 4. or 1, 2, 3.
C: 1, 3, 4. or 2, 4.
D: student can be understood but does not receive a check for any of the 4 criteria listed above.
F: there is no response, or he cannot be understood.

Comments: _____

_____

_____

_____ f. The student hears a sentence followed by three answers, which may be rejoinders, explanations, etc. He chooses a, b, or c, without seeing any French.

Example: 1) La jeune fille est sortie. Elle a dit...

a) Bonjour
b) à demain
c) ce soir-là

The student answers: a), b), c).

Comments: _____

_____

Other Suggestions: _____

_____

2. How can 1.d above be implemented in view of the fact that most High School Language Labs are not equipped for recording of student responses? If the laboratory is equipped for recording, there is the problem of storing tapes or discs until time and place is found to listen to them. (Evaluation of students' responses while they are in the lab means that each student is being evaluated on a different question.)
Comments: _____

_____

3. Taking into consideration the problems of administering the test (e.g. volume of discs, lack of time, scheduling of classes in the lab on the day of the examination) what would you do for the audio-lingual part of your final examination?

_____ a. Not include any audio-lingual section on the final. Oral grades given throughout the semester are sufficient.

_____ b. Choose a type that can be scored easily (as 1.f) and include it as part of the two hour exam.

_____ c. Give a commercially prepared audio-lingual examination which is sent out of the district to be scored so as to ensure uniformity. It would be scheduled several weeks before the 2 hour final.

_____ d. Give a commercially prepared audio-lingual examination as a mid-semester departmental test, and a 2 hour final without oral questions of any type.

_____ e. Give a locally prepared audio-lingual examination as a mid-semester departmental test and a 2 hour final without oral questions of any type.

_____ f. Give either 3.d or 3.e in combination with 3.b.

Department Examination

1. How many department examinations do you feel should be given if the school requires a two hour final?

   _____ a. None.
   _____ b. Only the required final examination should be a departmental exam.
   _____ c. Two. A mid-semester audio-lingual examination and the regularly scheduled two hour examination.
   _____ d. All unit examinations (e.g. - five chapter tests given every few weeks.)

2. If students are being graded on a curve, does it matter very much what type of examination is given?

   Comments: _____

   _____

   Please rate the following in order of preference:

   _____ a. An examination carefully prepared by all members of the department, and covering all points of the textbook.
   _____ b. A commercially prepared examination which none of the teachers see until the day it is given.
   _____ c. An examination prepared by a member of the department who is not teaching that level.

3. What type of review would students receive as preparation for the test?

   _____ a. No information at all should be given beforehand.
   _____ b. The students should be told the type of examination they will take.
   _____ c. The students should be told the specific points that will be covered on the examination.
   _____ d. The students should be given as much information as possible about the examination as long as the actual questions are not revealed.

   Comments: _____

   _____

4. What percentage should be allotted to each section of the exam?
   _____ a. 50% audio-lingual (and/or oral-aural); 50% written (including grammar, vocabulary, reading comprehension.)
   _____ b. 40% audio-lingual (and/or oral-aural); 30% grammar; 30% reading comprehension and vocabulary.
   _____ c. Other: _____